



TOUCHPOINT

The Division of Education Newsletter

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DIVISION OF EDUCATION

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A Note from Dr. Tim

Greetings. In this edition of *Touchpoint* David Branson, former Music Supervisor for the Washoe Count School District, shares valuable teaching philosophies that are essential to being an effective and compassionate educator.



By David Branson

To be a Great Teacher— Words of Wisdom from My Mentor

The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires. ~William Arthur Ward

The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery. ~Mark Van Doren

To be a great teacher is a gift that continues to benefit students for a lifetime. Alan Harvey, one of my former music teachers, was one of my greatest mentors. He was still teaching students in his mid-sixties when he passed away. He inspired students through music and the many life lessons that he shared throughout his forty-year teaching career

What is it that makes a teacher truly great? How can those of us who aspire to be great teachers reach this goal?

Teaching is truly an art form; it takes much more than knowledge of subject matter and understanding of child development. To be a great teacher, you must also make a difference in a student's life. You need to challenge, encourage, scold at times and inspire a student to reach for distant goals and move beyond his or her current capabilities and skills.

My grandfather offered great advice about raising children, and I believe his advice applies to teaching as well. He recommended that parents watch their children, study them and look to see what interests and skills they possess. Through nurture and guidance parents can then help them to accomplish their goals by building on the potential they see inside of them.

A great teacher observes each student, looking for that student's unique capabilities, and then guides him to develop and grow. Many of the students attending our classes will never have a career in music. However, they are learning vital life lessons that will remain with them for years to

come. We as teachers need to demonstrate compassion, understanding, humanity, rigor and high standards. We must expect children to work at their highest possible level of performance. It is a form of prejudice to accept less than a child's best effort. Acknowledge your students' current levels of skill and then assist them to grow further. One of the greatest lessons we can teach our students is to be a productive team player each and every day.

Students need to know that you care for them, that you respect each of them as people and love them enough to not accept less than their best efforts. Think carefully about the messages you give to your students by how you conduct yourself in your work. Students will remember what you demonstrate by your behavior and how you speak to them much more than your actual words. Integrity, fairness, accountability, a sense of humor and compassion are critical to good teaching.

My former music teacher, friend and colleague taught me many of the lessons I have now shared with you. He pushed me to succeed, challenged my thinking, reached out his hand and gave me a model for successful teaching. I will miss him greatly, but his teaching will live on in me and in many of my former and current students.

As educators, we should all strive to become "great teachers." Although we may never reach greatness, our students will benefit from our efforts.



Welcome to our newest VIPs!

Bruce Carter

Director of Bands
Jackson Academy, MS

Brian Britt

Director of Fine Arts
Richardson ISD, TX

Our Next Issue Featuring:

An article by Peter Warshaw, the Fine Arts Supervisor for Leander ISD, Round Rock, TX.

In Our Last Issue:

Starred Thought: "The Band is Your Mirror" by Heidi I. Sarver
[Click here for the full article](#)